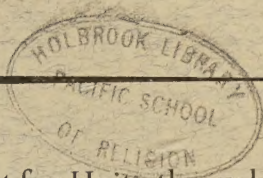


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# The Quest for Unity through Religion

LESSLIE NEWBIGIN

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Over sixty years ago Swami Vivekananda arrived in Chicago to attend the World Parliament of Religions. It would not be an exaggeration to say that his speech in Chicago marked the beginning of a new era in the history of religion, in that it was the first announcement of the claim of Hinduism to be not merely a religion, but *the* world religion—the religion within which the truths of all other religions had already been included and transcended. It is to the Hindu that the relation of the unity of all religions has been given: that is the conviction which gave Vivekananda his extraordinary position in the Parliament of Religions.

Within India itself, the belief that all religions are in essence one has become not merely an article of faith but almost an axiom of thought. Anyone who doubts its truth is regarded as semi-illiterate. In the new basic schools, which under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi's educational ideas are being established all over India, students are taught to take part in the festivals of all religions, to read all their scriptures, and to take part in forms of worship which claim to be inclusive of all that is included in the religions separately. When one remembers both the evils that have been inflicted upon India by the strife of religious communities and the terrible sterility of the purely secular education which has been imparted in government schools, one can but be moved by this noble effort to teach the rising generation a universal nonsectarian religion, as the basis of their efforts for the reconstruction of the national life. Against that background, the Christian missionary has to face the charge of sectarianism and separatism. The slogan, 'Christ, the Hope of the World,' is met by indignant repudiation: 'If by the word "Christ," you mean the same universal religious principle which is also in Buddha, in Krishna, in Mohammed, in Gandhi, we agree that this is the Hope of the World. But, if you mean that all the world is to follow one way, to be enrolled under one banner, to accept one dogma, namely, the one you bring us, then we say, "No." That is not the way to unity, but the way to sectarian strife. Your religious imperialism is out of date; it is the survival of an earlier day, when every frog in its own little pond thought that that pond was the ocean. We are happy to hear what you have to tell us about your religion; we recognize in Jesus an incarnation of the



one universal religious principle. We shall gladly worship him as we worship others. But if you insist that we must all join your flock, we must tell you that you are still in the kindergarten stage of religion; that if you want to make your contribution to our national life, you must abandon these ridiculous claims to exclusive truth, recognize the truth in all religions, and join with us as brothers in the one religious task.

I think that is a not unfair representation of the attitude of the good Hindu today to the claim of the Christian evangelist, and it will be at once conceded that there are Christians whose thinking on the subject is sympathetic to this kind of protest. Over twenty years ago the famous Laymen's Foreign Missionary Report, *Re-thinking Missions*, looked forward not to the displacement of other religions by Christianity but to their co-existence and co-operation until each has yielded up to the rest its own ingredient of truth.

Like Vivekananda, the Laymen's Report sees all existing religions as in some sense participants in one ultimate truth. The difference is that whereas the laymen regard that truth as something not at present within our grasp, the Hindu Swami speaks with much greater confidence. The laymen look forward to a long process of purgation, in which the religions must put off the elements of untruth which they contain. Vivekananda on the other hand, is confident that the contradictions between the religions are only apparent. 'They come,' he says, 'from the same truth adapting itself to the various circumstances of different natures.'<sup>1</sup> And to the question What is that truth? the higher Hinduism has, as we shall see, a confident answer. From this point of view Hinduism is conscious of a mission to the world: not the desire to spread the names and forms of Hinduism throughout the world, or to displace the names and forms of other religions, but to teach all the world that there is an ultimate truth, a transcendent standpoint from which all religious forms and names are seen to be merely relative, partial, and temporary.

## The Claim of Hinduism

One of the favourite parables expressing the Hindu attitude is the little story of the blind man and the elephant. It is related that one of the kings of Benares gathered together a number of beggars blind from their birth, placed an elephant in their midst, and offered a prize to the one who would give the best account of the animal. Needless to say, the accounts varied widely, and the beggars were soon quarrelling among themselves about their rival theories. The application to the relations between religions is obvious, but the limitations of the parable should be obvious, too. For one thing, to quarrel over a small prize is foolish; but if our eternal destiny depends upon the right answer to the riddle of experience, then there is no subject more worthy of disputation. More seriously, the parable surely must provoke us to ask for the credentials of the man who tells it and who implicitly claims that in the country of the blind he alone can see. The claim of Hinduism is, in fact, this. There is a fundamental intolerance implied in the Hindu position, no less than in the Christian. His attitude of equal tolerance to all forms of religion rests upon a definite conviction in the light of

<sup>1</sup> *Complete Works*, p. 16.



which he believes all the forms of religion to be but varied refractions of the truth which he sees. His position is thus different from the position represented by the laymen's inquiry. His attitude is not that of the man who recognizes that we are all seekers and that our best theories are but guesses about the unknown. It is the essence of the Hindu attitude that it claims to know the truth of which all existing religions are but distortions and retractions. It is that claim which underlies the universalism of the higher Hinduism. It is a claim already to possess the clue to unity through religion. Until this present decade, India had not been strong enough politically to press this claim upon the world, though she has made it widely felt. It may be expected that in days to come she will do so with increasing confidence. Let us examine the claim and its basis.

## The Basis of the Hindu Claim

The most eminent and persuasive exponent of this Hindu claim today is the great philosopher and statesman, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who says:

The Hindu attitude to other religions is based upon a definite philosophy of life, which assumes that religion is a matter of personal realization. Spirit is free being, and its life consists in breaking free from conventions and penetrating into true being. The formless blaze of spiritual life cannot be expressed in human words. We tread on air so thin and rare that we do not leave any visible footprints. He who has seen the real is lifted above all narrowness, relativities, and contingencies.<sup>1</sup>

This inability to express the real in human words does not, however, as Radhakrishnan makes very clear, mean that there is anything vague about it. The basis of the Hindu position, as he says, is a very definite philosophy, which, like other philosophies, is capable of statement and of criticism and which, in turn, is based upon an experience which is described as 'personal realization', 'penetration into true being', 'seeing the real.' That philosophy is what India calls the 'Vedanta', the end and summation of all revelation. It teaches that the reality behind all the manifold appearance and all the ceaseless change which our five senses report to us is one undifferentiated and unchanging spirit and that that spirit is identical with our own spirit. That spirit is defined as 'pure awareness distinct from bodily states and mental happenings.'<sup>2</sup> And, as the repeated refrain of the Chandogya Upanishad expresses it, 'this whole world has that being for itself—that is reality—that is the self—that art thou, O Svetaketu.'<sup>3</sup>

This pure awareness, however, this naked condition of pure selfhood, is normally beyond our power to realize. In proportion as we depart from it, the world takes on an appearance of multiplicity and diversity. And not only so, the experience of pure selfhood which was present in the moment of mystical union now appears in our memory as something different from our empirical self (which, indeed, it is), and to that something we give the name of 'God.' To quote Radhakrishnan again: 'The attainment of spiritual status when refracted in the logical universe appears as a revelation of grace.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 316-17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> Chandogya Upanishad VI: 10.

<sup>4</sup> Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 29.



Thus for the Vedantin the whole conception of divine revelation belongs, along with the visible and tangible world, to the realm of *māyā*. Modern Hindu writers are anxious to insist that the doctrine of *māyā* does not mean that the phenomenal world is illusory. It does teach, however, that the appearance of multiplicity and change is illusory. For the Vedantin, the final truth is contained in the sentences which we have quoted from the Chandogya Upanishad, 'Thou art that.' Pure selfhood is the ultimate reality at the heart of all existence, 'Our real self is the Supreme Being.'<sup>1</sup> The apparent differences between things, and even the difference between subject and object, are transcended when the self understands its true nature. The phenomenal world cannot, according to the *māyā* doctrine, be dismissed as nonexistent. In so far as it is a refraction of the one reality seen through the eyes of the self which does not understand true selfhood, it is real; but its appearance of diversity, multiplicity, and change is unreal. 'So long as we are in the world of *māyā* and occupy a dualistic standpoint, the world is there standing over against us determining our perceptions and conduct.'<sup>2</sup> So Radhakrishnan paraphrases the teaching of Sankaracharya. Thus, so long as we are living in the world of illusion, the illusions are real to us. But this is precisely the character of all illusion. And the whole idea of divine revelation belongs to this world of illusion. The reality of which it is the refraction is none other than the mystical experience of unity with the supreme soul, which is the self.

The ultimate basis of the whole Hindu position is thus the experience of mystical union with the ultimate. On this Radhakrishnan is very explicit: 'The religions of the world can be distinguished into those which emphasize the object and those which insist on experience. For the first class, religion is an attitude of faith and conduct, directed to a power without. For the second, it is an experience to which the individual attaches supreme value. The Hindu and the Buddhist religions are of this class.'<sup>3</sup> That experience has been described many times by mystics, East and West, and the essential features of their description are the same. The essence of it is, first, a gradual withdrawal of the mind from the world of sense perception by exercise in ascetic discipline; second, the concentration of all the mental powers upon a single object, upon an image, a text, upon a single sound, such as the sacred syllable *om*, or upon some part of the body, until the soul becomes empty of everything except the object of its meditation; and, finally, the point is reached where even the object of meditation ceases to be an object distinct from the subject. Subject and object are dissolved in a single unitary awareness, which is not an apprehension of any object but only, if one may put it so, awareness in an intransitive sense. 'The soul, holding itself in emptiness, finds itself possessing all.' And those who have visited these sublime heights tell us that they have experienced a rapture beyond any earthly joy, a knowledge beyond logic, a peace beyond understanding.

### The Hindu Attitude to other Religions

It is that experience which provides the basis of certitude upon which the Hindu attitude to other religions rests. From that standpoint, every

<sup>1</sup> Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.



expression of the religious sense, whether it be the most primitive idolatry or the most refined and spiritual theism, is seen to be but a refraction of the one ultimate truth seen through human natures which are at various stages of development—that is to say, at various stages of liberation from the toils of *māyā*. Within such a view of reality, there is room for almost infinite tolerance. Human nature varies, and each man is free to join the stream of living religion at the place to which his nature and environment lead him. There is no place for mutual criticism or hostility. Each man must be encouraged to be faithful to the religious path of his choice but, at the same time, to penetrate behind the forms of religion, its alleged revelations, its creeds and dogmas and rituals, to find through them (and it does not matter what they are) the one truth, which is not a dogmatic statement or a personal meeting but an experience of identity with the Supreme Being.

The one thing which on this view cannot be tolerated is the one assertion which Christianity is bound to make, namely, that the Supreme Being has, once and for all, revealed himself in a historic person; that truth is to be found only by relating one's self to him; and that he is the centre around which the unity of mankind here in history is to be built. To such a claim, when it is clearly understood, Hinduism, in obedience to its own fundamental tenets, can only present an unrelenting opposition. From the point of view of the Vedānta, the preaching of the Christian Gospel is an assertion of ultimate validity for something which belongs to the world of illusion. If the preacher does it in ignorance, he may be gently and patiently helped to see beyond his illusion to the reality which he has not yet understood. But if he does it knowing what he is doing and if he steadily refuses to accept the view of his own faith which Hinduism offers him, then the limits of Hindu tolerance are necessarily reached. No tolerance can be infinite. It must be intolerant of intolerance; and when that tragic situation is forced upon us, we cannot help facing the question of truth. Is the Hindu view of religion true, and can it provide the means of unity for mankind?

There is no need to doubt, and it would be an impertinence to doubt, the reality of the mystic experience. But when the mystic builds upon his experience a philosophy and a theology, the matter is open for debate. I have no special competence to take part in that debate, but this comment at least may be pardoned: The Hindu mystic begins by abstracting himself from all apprehension of phenomena. It is therefore only to be expected that he ends with a state of pure unitary awareness, undisturbed by any kind of multiplicity. He has what he set out to seek. From the standpoint he has taken, all multiplicity has ceased to exist, because he has deliberately shut it out of his attention. But to conclude that this experience is the clue to ultimate reality is not a logical deduction, but a leap of faith; for the whole question is What is the relation of that ultimate reality to the multiplicity of phenomena? We face here, surely, an ultimate decision, which is, in the last resort, a decision of faith: whether we regard the multiplicity and change which characterize human life as a mere veil which has to be torn away in order that we may have access to ultimate reality, or whether we regard them as the place where we are to meet with and know and serve the divine purpose; whether salvation is by absorption into the Supreme Being, conceived as undifferentiated and unchanging spirit abstracted from all contact with phenomena, or whether it is by reconciliation to the



Supreme Being, conceived as personal will active in and through phenomena. Here is the dividing line between all religions ; and Hinduism stands fair and square on one side of it. Its claim to be the truth transcending all religions is necessarily a flat denial of the central truth of biblical religion. The reality of the mystical experience need not be denied and, indeed, cannot be, but the assertion that it is the clue to reality is an affirmation of faith which must be judged by the criteria that are proper in the field of religious belief.

It follows from the nature of this basic experience that the unity which Hinduism offers is rather the negative unity of tolerance than the positive unity of love. Hinduism is a way of salvation for the individual. Radhakrishnan, after describing the varieties of Hindu theological thought, adds: 'All, however, are agreed in regarding salvation as the attainment of the true status of the individual. Belief and conduct, rites and ceremonies, authorities and dogma, are assigned to a place subordinate to the art of conscious self-discovery and contact with the divine.'<sup>1</sup> Hinduism has no doctrine of the church. By its essential character, it bids men seek beyond all the visible forms which are the mark of any human community. The standpoint from which it views all religions is the standpoint of the experience of unity with the Supreme Self, and that standpoint is necessarily a purely individual experience. There can be no such thing as a corporate *samādhi*. Nor can the individual experience lead out consistently into a corporate expression. It produces an almost infinite tolerance and courtesy to all other faiths and an abhorrence of all religious strife and bigotry. But it would be quite contrary to its own nature to produce a historic community bound together by fixed rules and customs. Modern Hinduism is largely the faith of men who have been educated in Christian schools and colleges or at least in a medium full of Christian ideas; men who know their Bibles better than many Christians do; men who have learned to love and reverence Jesus and his teachings. Their writings are, therefore, full of Christian phraseology, and their activities are often profoundly influenced by Christian ideas. But so long as the central and controlling idea is salvation through the knowledge of identity with the Supreme Self, so long as the world of multiplicity and change is believed to be not wholly real, Hinduism can never put a visible human community into the centre of its creed, as Christianity puts the church. The unity which it offers is the cessation of strife, not the creation of a new community.

Thus the Hindu offer of reconciliation between religions is a consistent whole from start to finish. It begins with the assumption with which it ends, namely, that the phenomenal world of multiplicity and change is illusory. It therefore begins by a process of withdrawal from that world, and it ends with a conception of salvation which can have no organic relation to any particular historic events or to any visible historic community. Its claim to be the truth transcending all religions is necessarily at the same time a negation of the truth of those religions as their adherents understand them. So far from providing the basis for a permanent truce between the religions, it is—when properly understood—a declaration of war upon all religions which claim to be based upon a historic revelation.

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<sup>1</sup> Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*



There is no escaping the fact that the unity of mankind can be achieved only around some centre, and therefore the question 'What is the true centre?' is the vital question. There is no way to unity by mere amalgamation, wholesale syncretism, or universal toleration. Men are not made one except by something which draws them together. When the Hindu says, 'All rivers flow into the ocean; all ways lead to God,' he is, in fact, bearing witness to a very definite faith as to the ultimate nature of man, of the world, and of God, and we cannot avoid asking the question 'Is it true?' Once that question is raised, we are again in the realm of conflict between religions. The unity of mankind cannot be achieved except as a unity in the truth; and truth cannot make concordats with falsehood. The quest for unity must itself involve the steady repudiation of every claim to achieve unity around a false centre.

Religion deals with the sacred, that is to say, with that which makes upon man a claim to which every other claim has, in principle, to be subordinated. In so far as religion achieves intellectual coherence through theological reflection and universality through effective contact with the life of mankind as a whole, it must do so by showing the believer how all life and experience are related to the sacred. Thus every mature and universal religion will have its own interpretation of the multiplicity of religions. This interpretation is part of its own claim to be the ultimate and universal truth. When Vivekananda claims to speak for a religion in which the truth of all other religions is included, he is speaking the language proper to religion, just as Paul was when he said to the Athenians, 'What ye worship in ignorance, this set I before you.' When the authors of the Laymen's Report look forward to a higher synthesis of all existing religions, they are, in fact, spokesmen of a new religion claiming to be the ultimate truth before which every other interest must give way. Though they modestly place the revelation of this truth in the future, it would not be difficult to deduce from their writing an outline of its contents. Every claim to reconcile conflicting religious claims is itself in some sense a claim to religious truth and must be examined on its merits as such.

## The Christian Claim

What, then, shall we say of the claim implicit in the existence of the World Council of Churches and explicit in the title of the assembly which has recently met: 'Christ, the Hope of the World.' The World Council of Churches, like the World Parliament of Religions, draws together bodies which hold profoundly different interpretations of the truth. Within its membership are to be found teachings which mutually contradict one another on important issues. Its member churches are not able in all cases to recognize one another as churches. Yet, by their covenanting together to form this council and by many public statements, they have confessed that there is a truth which holds them together in spite of the differences which hold them apart. We have to ask: 'What is the basis upon which this unity is affirmed in spite of disagreement on large and important matters of truth?' We have seen that, in the case of the Hindu claim to reconcile all religions, the basis is the mystical experience and the claim that this is the path to identification with the Supreme Being. What, in the case of the ecumenical



movement, is the basis upon which unity is affirmed in the face of diversity?

The first assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam answered that question in these words: 'We are divided. . . . But Christ has made us one, and He is not divided.' What exactly does the phrase 'Christ has made us one' mean? The subject of the sentence is the name of a person who lived at a particular and somewhat remote place and time in human history. The predicate is a statement of personal experience. How exactly are they related?

## The Basis of the Christian Claim

I have only once attended a meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, and at that meeting two new churches were admitted—the Holy Orthodox Church of Greece and the Presbyterian Church of Formosa. If one were to ask representatives of each of those churches to sit down with us and together answer the question 'In what sense has Christ made you one?' how would they answer? Leaving aside the fact—so helpful to the ecumenical movement—that distance lends enchantment to the view, we should find that our two friends were obliged to make the most radical criticisms of each other, that, in fact, each would have very grave reservations about applying the term 'Christian Church' to the other. Why, then, have they both accepted membership in a Council of Churches. In what sense has Christ made them one? The answer which we might expect would be something like this: 'We both recognize that in Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified, dead, buried, and risen again, in Palestine under Pontius Pilate, God was reconciling the world to himself; that he died to take away our sin and the sin of the world, and that in him we have been born again to a new life in the Spirit; as we listen to one another confessing this faith in Christ and this debt to Christ, we acknowledge these as a reality in one another; and we acknowledge that this reality is of such transcendent importance that it ought to govern our relations to one another; therefore, while not surrendering the truth which we hold or admitting the error which we see in one another, we agree to live, work, talk and pray together in the faith that Christ will complete in us his work and make us one as he wills us to be.' Let us try to analyze this more carefully.

1. The starting point is an event alleged to have happened in Palestine, under Pontius Pilate. The Vedantin finds the clue to all experience in a particular kind of individual spiritual experience, which is, in principle, equally available to all men and women at all times and places; starting from that, he develops his whole world-view in logical order and consistency. The Christian finds the clue in a particular historic event, unique, unrepeatable, and unrepeatable. Everything hangs on that. If that event did not, in fact, happen, the whole Christian religion falls to the ground. That is why accurate, critical historical study is essential to Christianity. To the Vedantin this is incredible folly; it is, for him, self-evident that no universal truth can be established on the basis of a particular event in the flux of history. To the Christian, on the other hand, everything hangs upon this. His creed is a statement of historic happenings, and at its centre stands the phrase 'under Pontius Pilate'.



2. Consistent with his starting point, the Christian insists that he is related to that once-and-for-all event through a continuous, living, historic process. The report of the event comes to him in a tradition which is both oral and written and which is continuous from the original event until today. Christians may differ as to the relation between these two strands of tradition, but all in fact acknowledge and depend upon the double strand. The Roman Catholic, with all his emphasis on tradition, treats the written Scripture as inerrant; the most redoubtable Protestant receives the Scriptures in and through a living tradition of spiritual experience.

3. The character of the once-and-for-all event governs the character of the unity which it creates. The experience which lies at the base of the Vedanta does not issue in a visible community. The typical *sannyāsi* is an isolated figure; if he has company, it consists of those who have come to him to receive for themselves the secret of enlightenment. The experience of enlightenment does not create community; on the contrary, it frees him who attains it from the bonds of all human community, including those of family. He is henceforth at one with all that is, and there is no place for any particular attachments. The death of Jesus, on the other hand, has, from the beginning of the Christian tradition, been interpreted as an atonement. It is an event by which atonement is wrought between God and men and therefore between man and his fellow-man. The unity thus created between men is not simply an intellectual one; it does not consist in the sharing of a common set of beliefs, though that is involved in it. It is the reconciliation of persons in their totality to one another. It is the mutual forgiveness of sins, based upon that fact that in Christ the sins of all have been forgiven by God. It is the replacement of mutual hostility by mutual love.

Here we introduce a set of terms completely alien to the whole vocabulary of the Vedanta. For the Vedantin, the disunity of humanity is the product of man's involvement in *māyā*; it is the result of *avidyā*, of man's failure to know and to realize his identity with the one spirit. For the Christian, the disunity of mankind is due to his sin, to his having abused the divine gift of responsibility, turned the divine gift of love into self-love, and so fallen into fear, envy, and hatred toward his neighbour. In Christ, God has, by a new creative act in the very midst of a humanity corrupted by sin, provided a place of atonement, a *hilasterion*, a mercy-seat, to which sinful men may come for reconciliation. This reconciliation involves a complete inward revolution, a breaking-up of the deeps of human nature, a death and rebirth, a redirecting of the whole vital power of human nature by which what had formerly been harnessed to the task of self-seeking is turned outward in active love toward the neighbour. It places a man in a completely new situation in a new field of forces, as the result of which his whole powers are set free from the task of self-preservation and self-justification and are directed upward and outward in gratitude for the free gift of forgiveness.

The relationship thus created between men is of a quite different character from that which arises out of unanimity of opinion or even out of common participation in one type of experience. It has its base in the faith that the Holy One died for the unholy, that the source of all loveliness loved the unlovely. Therefore, it rejoices to bear tensions and even incongruities. On any matter which would call in question



the reality and sufficiency of the atoning act upon which it rests, it must be intransigent; on every other matter it can afford to be, and rejoice to be, infinitely forbearing. But its forbearing will not be of the kind which easily lets every man go his own way because in a world of illusion clear-cut distinctions are folly. It will be earnest in wrestling for the truth. But yet the unity does not depend upon intellectual unanimity. It is the relationship of mutual love and responsibility which is created by the recognition of a common obligation to infinite love.

It is of the very essence of such a relationship that it must issue in a visible community. Love is nothing if it does not issue in words and deeds by which the lover binds the beloved to himself. Love is infinitely more than tolerance. Tolerance requires no visible community to express it, but love does. The deeper and stronger the love, the more binding will be the mutual obligations to which it will lead. Therefore, it belongs to the very essence of the atonement wrought by Christ, that it leads to the creation of a visible community binding men together in all nations and all generations.

4. How, then, are we to understand the bond which binds together churches in the World Council which are deeply divided from one another on matters of truth? As in the case of the Hindu conception of religious unity, so here we must go to the starting point and understand the whole from there. The starting point is the faith that, in the once-and-for-all events which we confess in the Creed, the clue to all existence has been given.

In Jesus Christ, God the Holy One has died for sinners. The holiness is wholly his; the sin is mine. Even my understanding of what he has done is clouded by my sin. My formulation of what he has done and my obedience to him have no finality. It is only in him and his finished work that there is finality. When, therefore, I meet another body of Christians which acknowledges the lordship of Christ and the finality and sufficiency of what he has done, but differs from me in its interpretation of the saving events and of the life which flows from them, I am placed in an existential relation with its members which I cannot deny, even though I may find myself in acute disagreement with them about its nature and implications. All who have shared in the life of the ecumenical movement will recognize the situation which I am trying to describe. As one talks and prays with the fellow-Christian of another confession, one is driven to recognize that here is the same acknowledgment of an infinite obligation to the One Redeemer. The common acknowledgment of this infinite obligation makes it impossible for the one to disown the other. The same Holy Spirit by whose working in the heart I am driven to acknowledge Christ's sole lordship drives me to acknowledge also his presence in the other's confession. The bond that unites us is not a mere feeling, not a mere agreement in thought, not a merely natural sympathy, it is an actual knitting-together of two persons, which can be described either by saying that the Holy Spirit unites us or by saying that the death of Christ for us both places us in a relation to each other wherein we can but acknowledge each other as brothers. Within this acknowledgment there is room for the possibility of wide difference of belief. Just because the very basis of our relationship is the fact of the all-sufficient death of the Holy One for sinners, our recognition of one another is compatible with the recognition that each of us may, in his formulation of the nature of Christ's work, be led far



astray by sinful blindness. We must claim absoluteness and finality for Christ and his finished work; but that very claim forbids us to claim absoluteness and finality for our understanding of it. The resulting relationship between us is characterized, therefore, by a complete intransigence in regard to the central ground of our faith, along with a willingness to recognize and learn from one another in the realms where we differ. For this mutual recognition the word 'toleration' is not appropriate, because the relationship is much more than tolerance. 'Tolerance' suggests leaving one another alone, and this is precisely what Christians cannot do. If contradictions of belief and practice are not allowed to destroy fellowship, it is because they are recognized as the results of that sin and its resultant blindness from which Christ has redeemed us. Therefore, the relationship of mutual responsibility into which Christ puts us by his atoning work lays upon us the obligation to wrestle with these differences in frankness and humility, until they yield deeper insight into God's nature and will.

Everything depends upon the starting point. For the Christian, it is the person and work of Christ as the clue to all reality. About that the Christian has to be as intransigent as the Hindu is about his. The characteristic fruit of the Hindu starting point is toleration, in the form of which I have tried to speak earlier. The characteristic fruit of the Christian starting point is the creation of a new relationship, a relationship of binding mutual responsibility between persons. Within that relationship a right understanding of the starting point issues in an attitude which can hold profound differences of belief and practice within a tension of love. But it is a tension. It is not static but dynamic, full of movement and of conflicting force. The resolution of the tension comes as and when difference leads to penitent acknowledgment of our sinful blindness, and from that to a fresh apprehension of the divine will and nature revealed in Christ. Above all, the Christian starting point requires and creates a visible community. Binding mutual responsibility can be expressed only in a visible community. So, from the beginning, the gospel has the church at its heart, and so also the ecumenical movement cannot remain a mere movement, but must necessarily give birth to something like the World Council. The unity which Christ creates must, of its own nature, take to itself some such visible and tangible embodiment.

To the question What is the proper form of that embodiment? I shall return in a moment. But first the line of argument must be pursued in another direction. I have asserted that the starting point of the whole Christian understanding of the world is the series of historic events centering in the death of Jesus Christ under Pontius Pilate, interpreted as the all-sufficient atonement between God and man and between man and his neighbour. This event, so understood, places those who understand it in a relation with one another which can be expressed only in the form of a visible community. The church is organic to the gospel. But, in saying this, we have only said the first half of what has to be said. The atoning work of Christ places me in a new existential relationship not only with my fellow-believer but also with every human being, whether he is a believer or not; for that atoning act is directed to the whole human race, and not to anything less. Christ died for all men. Speaking of his own death, he is reported to have said: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto myself.' No limit can be drawn



to the potential reconciling power of his sacrifice, short of the limits of humanity itself. Those who have been, by the power of the Holy Spirit, brought within the circle of that reconciling power and reborn into the new system of relationships which it creates are by that very fact committed to participation in that reconciling ministry. They are bound to go out to all men with the words that the apostles used to the Corinthians: 'We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us, we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.' In other words, by their membership in the church they are committed to a mission to the world. They cannot abandon the latter without forfeiting the former.

## The Christian Dilemma

It is precisely here that the Christian, looking at the world today, is liable to find himself in a dilemma. If he goes out into the non-Christian world to prosecute vigorously the Christian mission, he must appear in many places to be the agent not of unity but of separatism. That is especially true in India today. The evangelistic missionary is looked upon as, at best, an anachronism left over from the age of colonialism and, at worst, a positive menace to national unity and progress. That attitude is, of course, far from universal among non-Christians, but it is dominant. In the face of it the missionary is assailed by three temptations: the first is to bury himself in the affairs of the Church and to evade real meeting with the non-Christian culture. The second is to engage in a flurry of welfare activities of the kind most likely to be popular at the moment with the powers that be. The third is to align himself with the most sympathetic leaders of the other religions in a profession of loyalty to 'Truth', the implication being that 'Truth' is something which transcends and includes both his message and theirs. Examples of all three are to be found in India today. The first, which is perhaps the most popular, requires no comment. It is a simple evasion of the church's fundamental task. The second may earn quick popularity, but it is mocking men with false hopes. It is only by deliberately blinding ourselves that we can persuade ourselves to believe that the world will be saved by the universal dissemination of the economic and cultural achievements of Europe and America. The third is a frank abandonment of the central message of Christianity, which is the offer of reconciliation with God and men through the death of Christ. It is not possible to undertake such an abandonment in the face of the non-Christian world and at the same time to retain any living reality of faith within Christendom. This is no longer a remote issue. The world is now a neighbourhood, and the implications of the missionary character of Christianity are forced right upon our attention, whether we like it or not. If Christianity is true, then it is the centre—not merely in theory but in a concrete visible community—for the reconciliation of mankind. If it is not that centre, then it is untrue in its central affirmations and ought to be abandoned.

It ought by now to be clear to all that the ecumenical movement can have no enduring substance if it is not missionary through and through. The claim to transcend religious differences must, as has been said already, rest upon some claim of truth, unless it be a merely cynical indifference to truth or a merely loveless indifference to the eternal



destiny of our fellow-men. The Hindu claim rests upon a definite conception of religious truth which we have examined. The ecumenical movement within Christendom rests upon something different, upon the once-and-for-all atonement wrought by Jesus Christ. But that very fact involves it in a mission to the world. If, in seeking to be faithful to him who said, 'I will draw all men unto myself,' we appear to others to be separatists and sectarians, we can comfort ourselves by the reflection that every claim to draw men together must rest upon some truth, must derive from some centre, and that whatever the truth be, and whatever the centre, it must be one liable to human criticism and opposition. There is no standpoint available to man which is not some particular standpoint, and every claim to reconcile men must share the precariousness which arises from that fact.

### The Scandal of Disunity

But we must immediately add a second reflection which is a source not of comfort but of deep shame. And this brings us back to the question which we were discussing a moment ago. The Christian claim that Christ is the centre round which all mankind must be made one has to encounter much more than the necessary amount of resistance in the minds of good men just because that claim is so flagrantly contradicted by the disunity of Christendom itself. The real scandal of this situation is only fully manifest when the church is in a missionary situation in the face of a dominant non-Christian religion. The claim of a small minority, in the midst of a vast and ancient religious civilization, to have the ultimate secret of man's reconciliation would in any circumstances be likely to arouse disbelief. But when that small minority is itself divided into a multitude of yet smaller sects, the claim becomes not merely incredible but laughable. It is not possible for the same group of men in one context—when facing the non-Christian world—to assert that the death of Christ is the one sufficient event by which all men may be made one family under God, and, at the same time, in another context—when dealing with one another—to assert that the event is not sufficient to enable those who believe in it to live as one family. The disunity of the church is a public denial of the sufficiency of the atonement. It is quite unthinkable that the church should be able effectively to preach that atonement and to become, in fact, the nucleus of the reconciled humanity, while that denial stands. So long as it stands, the world will see in the church not the one place where all men may at last come home, but a series of separatist bodies, each marked by a whole series of cultural peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of belief and practice. Even those who love the church best would surely stand appalled before the thought that the whole human race should find its unity in any of the sects as we now know them. Yet it is not possible to proclaim Christ as the centre for the world's reconciliation quite apart from the demonstration of that reconciliation as an experienced fact.

Thus the question of the visible embodiment of the unity of mankind in Christ becomes one of pressing urgency. If the heart of the Christian message is the good news of atonement for the human race wrought out in the death of Christ and issuing in a newly created community of reconciled men and women, and if the preaching of the gospel to the whole world is inseparable from the existence of that community, then

the question 'What is the proper form of this new community?' is plainly central to our whole task. I have repeatedly stressed the fact that it is a visible community, an actual human fellowship offering to all men the centre for a reconciled humanity. But where on earth today can we find that fellowship? The Roman Catholic Church is confident that the answer is to be found without remainder in its own communion. The Orthodox Churches make a similar claim, though in a less exclusive form. The ecumenical movement is the recognition of Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant Churches that an answer must be given. If the world is to be made one in Christ, the world must be able to see the nucleus of that unity embodied in some sort of visible community. There is no more urgent task than to seek to meet that need. But we have to face the fact that there is no general agreement among Christians even as to the direction in which we ought to go in order to do so.

## The Embodiment of Unity in Christ

On that issue the World Council of Churches is (necessarily) officially neutral. It is itself a form of Christian unity and one of the dangers of the present situation is that the very success and value of the Council's work should lead to an obscuring of the other elements which are necessary to a full embodiment of unity in Christ. Nevertheless, there is to be found within the council itself a very wide range of views on the proper form of the Church's visible unity. The Orthodox Churches believe that they themselves contain the fulness of the Church's being maintained in unbroken continuity from apostolic time and that it is only by reconciliation with them that other Christian bodies can participate completely in the fulness of Churchliness. The Anglican Churches have generally made it clear that they regard as essential to the Church's being the acceptance of the historic episcopate and that the proper form of the Church's unity would be a federation of regional churches, all episcopally ordered and having complete fellowship with one another on that basis. Among others there is wide diversity; some regard doctrinal agreement as the one essential and do not see any need for a uniform ministry; some look for the linking-together of existing denominations in a federal union, each retaining its own separate existence and traditions, but all being regarded as parts of one Church and therefore enjoying complete intercommunion; some again—though probably the majority of these are outside the membership of the World Council—see no need for any all-embracing organization and would be content to have the maximum liberty for every group of Christians to organize itself as and how it wishes, without reference to others, but with the hope that all would be willing to treat one another with brotherly charity and respect.

It is not my business here to comment in any detail upon this babel of opinion. I shall make only a few general comments on the issues which are involved.

1. The question of visible organization cannot be evaded and is, in fact, central to our present task. The very essence of the Christian claim to be the way to unity for mankind is that it springs from an atonement wrought out in history and issues in an actual community. Therefore the question 'What is the proper form of that community?' cannot be evaded.



2. Those who fear and resist the formation of vast organizational structures deserve to be heard with respect. There is at least a very good case to be made out for the view that large-scale centralized organization is harmful to the development of man's personality and incompatible with the nature of the atonement wrought in Christ.

3. It is not possible to believe that any of the existing ecclesiastical structures, or even all of them together in one organization, could provide the home for the whole human race. The proper nature of the Church is that it should be simply the new man, humanity re-created in the last Adam, Jesus Christ. It should be the place wherein mankind would see its own true image, its own self according to the original divine intention. One of the effects of division is that the divided parts have been led to emphasize and develop those elements of belief and practice which distinguish them from one another; the result is a series of societies, each marked by some peculiarity of tradition, and that very peculiarity makes it impossible that it should be the home for all mankind. It is possible to hope and pray that all mankind should be made one in Christ; it is not, I think, possible for the most devout Christian to pray that the whole of mankind should become Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican, or Methodist. These separated bodies which we have come to call (in defiance of the usage of the New Testament) 'Churches' have necessarily developed a kind of life, a kind of structure, a kind of organization, which makes it impossible to believe that any one of them or all of them tied together in a superorganization of the same kind could ever be the home for all mankind.

4. Nevertheless, these broken fragments, distorted by their divisions, are yet, in fact, the place where the atonement in Christ is being continuously and ever afresh made available for the life of mankind. They have at the heart of their being the one secret of healing for the world. What is required of them is a return in fellowship to that source, to the place where self-sufficient humanity is brought to death and rebirth, to the place where forgiveness and reconciliation are alone to be had. Their coming together must necessarily be a kind of corporate dying, in order to live anew in Christ. It is impossible to say in advance exactly what that dying will involve. What is certain is that while the separated churches cling to their own individuality and seek to evade that dying, they cannot be reborn into the one fellowship which mankind will recognize as the nucleus of its remaking into one.

5. If we ask What is to be the character of the fellowship which issues from such a dying and rebirth; what—in other words—is the proper form of the Church's unity? I believe that at least these things can be said in answer: first, that it must be such that all who are in Christ in any place are, in that place, visibly one fellowship. Second, that it must be such that each local community is so ordered and so related to the whole that its fellowship with all Christ's people everywhere, and with those who have gone before and will come after, is made clear. That will mean at least this: a ministry universally recognized and visibly linked with the ministry of the Church through the centuries. But within these wide limits there are vast areas where we must simply say that we have yet to learn what is required of a fellowship which is truly to embody Christ's atonement in and for the world. What degree of uniformity in belief and practice is necessary in order to safeguard the fundamental truth upon which the very exist-

tence of the fellowship depends? What are the nature and method of organization proper to such a fellowship? How are authority and freedom to be related within it? What is the nature of the discipline which it must exercise in order to safeguard its true character as a fellowship founded upon Christ's atoning work for sinners? On each of these matters a vast amount might be said. It is quite certain that the Church has repeatedly demanded more uniformity than was necessary for the safeguarding of its essential nature, and has thereby obscured its essential nature; quite certain that it has often adopted methods of organization and kinds of authority which were not proper to it, and thereby obscured the gospel; quite certain that it has often abandoned the task of discipline or exercised it in a way that destroyed instead of creating. Our experience in South India has been that it was only the fact of union which compelled us to recognize and face these questions. It was when we were brought into one fellowship with others of widely differing traditions and when we were led to abandon our own separate existence as churches and throw ourselves together into a common life that we were compelled to listen to one another's criticisms, to face these questions, and to go back together to the centre of our faith in order to seek for the answers.

6. This leads me to my final comment. All our thinking and acting has to be controlled by our starting point, which is the atonement wrought by Christ for men. That atonement is the clue to unity for mankind, because it is the place at which men's sins are forgiven and they are enabled to forgive one another. It is the only place at which the fundamental problem of humanity is dealt with. It is only at that point that the churches can be made one. The essential nature of the unity which the Church can offer to mankind is the unity that issues from mutual forgiveness in the presence of the Crucified. The Church can offer that unity to mankind only when it is the substance of its own life. And it can be the substance of its own life only when its members are daily and weekly rediscovering for themselves that experience of mutual forgiveness. In a divided Church that does not happen. The fundamental problems of human community are evaded when men are offered a variety of churches from which they can take their choice. In that situation men are not compelled to face the issue of mutual forgiveness. They can simply avoid one another, and the churches become a series of clubs for the like-minded. When, on the other hand, the churches begin to tackle the issue of unity at the local level, then they are brought back to the starting point, to the Cross; for it is only there that sinful men and women can find the secret of community—there, where sin is forgiven. The search for unity drives us back to the Cross, which is the place alone where unity can be born.

But from that place we are bound to go out also beyond the bounds of Christendom to proclaim to the whole world that this is the place where it may be made one. Unity and mission, mission and unity, these must ever be the two foci of the ecumenical movement. The unity which the ecumenical movement seeks, transcending the differences between Christian denominations, is not—as some perhaps have thought it was—the first step toward a unity that would ultimately transcend all religious differences in some larger truth still to be discovered. The situation is precisely the opposite. The unity which the ecumenical movement acknowledges is a unity created by Christ in his atoning



death, and that finished work of his means unity not only for the churches but for the world in him. The same impulse that drives us to dig below our differences to find one another as forgiven sinners in the face of our crucified and ascended Lord drives us also to the ends of the earth to proclaim to all men that he alone is the secret of their unity. And the great task before the ecumenical movement is just this: to help to make that claim credible to the world by the demonstration of a Christian fellowship which the world could recognize as the nucleus of its own re-creation into one; it is, in fact, to be the instrument in the hands of Christ for the fulfilment of his own prayer that his people may be one, that the world may know.

The unity of mankind is no longer the dream of a few philosophers; it is the clamant necessity of today. But it will not be achieved by any amalgam of religions. It will not be set forward by any device which pretends to bypass the fundamental differences between the religions of mankind. There is no way of evading the necessity to take a stand. The greatest task before the Church today is simply to take her stand humbly but decisively upon the accomplished work of Christ upon the Cross and to go forth into all the world with the proclamation that here, and here alone, at the place where all men are made nothing, is the place where all men may be made one.

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The Word of God as authority *to* the Church ; the Holy Spirit working through brotherly love as authority *in* the Church—are not these the two foci of authority to be found in the New Testament ecclesia ?

T. O. WEDEL

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So long as nearly half mankind thinks that life is a thing to be escaped from, and nearly the other half thinks it a thing to be enjoyed and exploited, and a minority of us Christians think it a thing to be redeemed, there can be no lasting peace.

J. MACKENZIE

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In Primitive Christianity ethics without theology is absolutely inconceivable. All 'Ought' rests here upon an 'Is'. The imperative is firmly anchored in the indicative. We are holy; this means that we should sanctify ourselves. We have received the Spirit; this means that we should 'walk in the Spirit'. In Christ we already have redemption from the power of sin; this means that now as never before we must battle against sin . . . . We are dealing with the working out of . . . 'the tension between already fulfilled and not yet fulfilled.'

O. CULLMANN

# The Vedanta Philosophy and the Message of Christ

P. CHENCHIAH

Dr. Carl Keller certainly strikes a new note in Christian theology. The Indian School of Theology with which he is good enough to associate my name would welcome him as a friend and well-wisher. So far the missionaries and Indian Christian critics who follow them see in Indian Christian theology only a deviation from the stereotype of orthodox church Christianity. I am pleased that he has not failed to perceive the deeper reality behind the movement, not a petulant departure from the Church but a departure from the Church in search of the Jesus Whom the Indian Christian longs to meet directly (*pratyakṣa*), and see Him with his own eyes and not through photos on the Church panels or hear him through canned voices in the Scriptures. I may add two more ingredients of Indian Christian theology of equal importance. Every nation is a chosen race, chosen for a different purpose: the choice consists in training and disciplining the mind to perceive features which but for such training escape the general attention. The Jew, the Greek, and the Indian are chosen people in religion just as the Germans are in pure philosophy and the French in art. The Indian interpretation of Christ is not merely a presentation of Jesus intelligible to the Hindu nor is it talking to him in a language of ideas understandable by him. It has nothing to do, primarily, with the transmission of the Christian message but with apprehending Jesus. Hinduism is our spiritual eye; but for its existence the Hindu convert would have passed by Christ. The Hindu heritage constitutes God's provision of an eye to the Hindu to see Christ. Before we rotate round Jesus, we have to be led to Him, and this task was entrusted by Christ to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us to Christ and Christ takes us to God: hence the primary concern of the Indian Christian is to possess the Holy Spirit and impart Him to the Hindu. Coming to Christ is more than a human task: the Holy Spirit alone can bring the Hindu to Christ. Indian Christian theology stands on three pillars—Hindu heritage, *pratyakṣa* experience of Christ and for that purpose the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The contributions of the Jew and the Greek have already been made through St. Peter and St. John; the Indian Christian contribution remains to be made.

Dr. Carl Keller has made a significant advance over others by applying the *advaitic* concept to the interpretation of God and His nature and of Christ and the Incarnation. He takes us above vague generalizations and affirmations about *advaita*, by putting it to the test of definite Christian doctrines, and points out the gains which *advaitic* doctrine



yields. The prominent features of his article to which I should like to state my reactions are:—

1. Sankara advaitism as typical of Hindu religious consciousness ;
2. The interpretation of Sankara advaitism through Kant, as his countryman and philosopher Deussen has done ;
3. The contributions of Sankara advaitism to theology and Christology respectively.

### Sankara Advaitism

There is no denying the intellectual pre-eminence and prestige of advaita in Hinduism. It has influenced Hindu theism and fundamentally altered Hindu metaphysics. It has uncovered an experience of God beyond all description and reachability. Nevertheless I do not think it would be correct to say that Sankara advaitism is typical of Hindu religious experience. The influence of Sankara is largely due to the fact that the advaitic doctrine stands as the background underlying Hindu experiences in all their variety, without affecting their validity. It has chosen to lie with *Karma* and *Bhakti* as its bedfellows and to accommodate itself to caste and temple ideology. In tradition it was not a reformative force, though it must be said that modern advaitism has shown a reformative character, a capacity for social service. I may say Sankara's advaitism has a philosophical prestige out of all proportion to its influence in shaping religious experience. It has imparted to religious thought the feeling of immeasurable depths below and unattainable heights above in God—but these all lie behind and beyond human experience like the heavens above *gopurams*—without affecting the complicated religious structure of doctrine and belief. It has been something of a plus added to the historic process which it neither touches nor transforms.

### The Interpretation of Sankara through Kant

The interpretation of Sankara in the light of Kant introduces a terminology and sets problems not germane to Sankara. Reality and appearance do not belong to Sankara's advaitism, in which *sat* and *asat* and *māyā* are the governing ideas. Kant, proclaimed in emphatic terms by Bradley, holds that appearance and reality are the constituents of things. Appearance is reality in the context of time and space, which not only reveal but also distort it. Reality assumes a mask that hides its real face. Dr. Keller's whole article turns on how reality can appear and does appear without fully disclosing itself. Both in Sāṅkhya, the parent of all Indian philosophy, and in advaita *sat* and *asat* are two different orders having no connection with each other. In advaita the reality never appears and appearance has no reality whatsoever. Both Kant and Sankara agree that reality has no manner of resemblance to appearance : in Kant it is so because time and space twist it out of all recognition, in Sankara because reality has no truck with appearances. Dr. Keller observes that the investigations of God's relation to the appearances and of the appearances themselves may be more difficult. To the advaitin the problem does not exist because God has no relation to appearance. In this connection I find Ramanuja disposed of in rather a cavalier way. Then again he says that there is no solution to the problem of

creation, i.e., of the appearances, if their *full* reality and God's absolute transcendence of existence are taken for granted. The doctrine of the degrees of reality is a modern apology for advaita: it represents a way for the modern philosopher to get out of the difficulties of the ancient thought, but advaita itself does not propound it. *Lilā* and *Māyā* again cannot be equated: they spring from different schools; *Māyā* is advaitic, *Lilā* is Viśiṣṭādvaitic. Statements like these, 'Christ is God, turning towards the appearances, appearing in appearances,' and 'in Christ the absolute transcendental God severs Himself from Himself to produce appearances and to be appearance', would be totally unintelligible to the advaitin: advaita acquits reality of any such tendencies and inclinations.

The introduction into advaita of the Barthian conception of the 'wholly other' shows how far analogies of advaita in the West may move away from its mood and spirit in the land of its birth. The conception of the 'wholly other' is totally inconsistent with Indian religious experience and the philosophy ensuing from such experience. It may be, in logical deduction and dialectic, that God, so different from His appearance, can be characterised as 'wholly other'. But Upanishadic and advaitic experience was altogether different. 'Brahmāsmi' (I am Brahma) and the other *Mahāvākyas* accepted by advaita postulate an antipodic experience. An 'I' that is Brahman, an experience of identity—a total absence of a sense of separation from God or of the dark night of the Christian mystic—runs through the basic Upanishadic experience. The transcendentalism of advaita radically differs from that of Jewish thought. I have no space to develop the idea but it cannot be denied that the supreme experience out of which advaita arose was one of oneness with reality.

If we look at Sankara with Indian eyes and not German we find that, notwithstanding his high prestige, post-Sankarite advaitism has been a critique of Sankara. The debating issue was not, curiously enough, the nature of Brahman but the nature of basic experience in *Samādhi*, and the nature of experience or *Māyā* itself. Post-advaitic criticism sets up the advaitic description of the supreme state, as against the Upanishadic experience, and points out where it differs. 'I am Brahman', say the Upanishads: advaita wipes out the words 'I am', and leaves 'Brahman' alone. Dr. Carl Keller rightly observes that Vedānta is the crown of Hinduism, but the parent of Vedānta is to be found in the Upanishads. The Vedānta of six *darsanas* views the Vedānta from a Buddhist standpoint and in so doing alters it radically.

There are really about five philosophical advaitisms in Hinduism; all claim to descend from the Upanishads and to interpret them correctly. The typical Hindu religious experience was that in the Upanishads and not that in advaita. The experience that has entered into the make-up of the religious Hindu mind does not assert that Brahman alone exists and that the many are unreal, but that separation is unreal. The many can become one; what *māyā* should lose is not itself but its sense of discreteness. 'I and My Father are one' is Upanishadic but not necessarily advaitic. The Upanishadic experience of becoming one will yield richer fruit, when applied to the interpretation of the relation of God to Jesus, than the advaitic postulate, 'One only exists'. Whether Jesus and God are initially one or two, in incarnation they have become one. Christians may be many but in Christ they have become one; that is re-incarnation.



## The Contribution of Sankara to Theology and Christology

There are many advaitisms in Hinduism, viz:—

- (1) Sankara advaita; one alone exists; the sense of difference arises from *Māyā* ;
- (2) Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja ; nature and men are the body and Brahman the soul ;
- (3) Dvaitādvaita of Nimbārka ; similarity and difference are both real;
- (4) Suddhādvaita of Vallabha ; Krishna, the avatar, is alone the sole reality ;
- (5) Aurobindo's integral unity as reality.

Hinduism, philosophical and religious, combines two opposing currents; one, emerging from a sense of the unreality of the world and creation, attempts to flow back to the pre-creative reality of Brahman: the other, holding the world to be real but imperfectly real, seeks to bring Brahman into the cosmos. The 'idam' (all this is Brahman) in the first Upanishad Isopanishad, and the 'neti' (all this is not Brahman) in the latter Upanishads, are two fundamental attitudes, and the strength of Hinduism lies in its refusal to abandon one for the other. It refuses the seductions of the senses when it says, 'all this is Brahman'; it refuses the seduction of reason when it says, 'all this is not Brahman'. The Indian inheritance holds both propositions, though they are contradictory, and throws logic to the winds; hence the many schools of advaita.

Sri Krishna affirms, 'I am', in the Gita, Sankara affirms, 'I am not' in his Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya. If we take the Incarnation seriously, 'idam' theology will do justice to it, and not 'neti'. The avatar has been a stumbling block to advaitins in Hinduism and Barthians in Christianity. Sankara passes over Gita IV. 7, 'Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata, then I come into being from age to age', without commenting, giving only *pāda* and *vishaya* (the meaning of the words). Avatars are the headache of advaita just as miracles are the headache of theological professors; the Incarnation does not fit into the advaitic framework. Sankara was a worshipper of Śakti, the consort of Siva, and not a worshipper of Krishna, although he pays homage to Krishna by writing a commentary on the Gita. Advaitism, an uncompromising doctrine of the transcendent, may throw light on theology; all that Dr. Keller says of advaitic illumination may be true of Christian theology, but it is a poor support for Christology. Barthians are in the same predicament as Sankarites; they do not know Christ after the flesh—as if there was any other Christ; the resurrected and ascended Lord had a body and carried it to heaven. I think that while Vedanta experience is fundamental to Hinduism we need not restrict it to Sankara's advaita. I would interpret Christ from the Upanishadic standpoint, rather than from the advaitic. Those portions of Dr. Keller's article which attempt to interpret the Incarnation from the advaitic standpoint are the least convincing; the Jewish mind could hardly ever attain to advaita and to quote psalms in support has the appearance of a tour-de-force.

Hinduism is still growing. The canon is a human expedient; history does not stop because we draw lines before it and abjure it not to cross:

the closure of the canon both in Christianity and Hinduism arose out of a fear of God's growing revelation. Modern Hinduism has as much right to be heard as ancient. Dr. Radhakrishnan, who popularized the Vedanta in British University circles, holds that *nirguna* Brahman should not be regarded as a separate reality from *saguna*; Sankara would not agree to this. Sri Aurobindo belongs to the advaitic tradition, although he may not be in the lines of its apostolic succession. His doctrine proclaims that God fulfils Himself in creation; the supra-mental life will perfect man and make him embodied God. We have no right to rule out modern advaitins; they are most helpful in interpreting Christ to the modern Hindu.

The contribution of Sankara to theology should be acknowledged. He did the same service for religious experience as Freud did for psychology. The mystery of life cannot be grasped in the measure of man; the Brahman stretches beyond and behind the human mind. The mind that loses itself in the immeasurable Brahman comes back refreshed and illumined and understands life better, although it cannot explain why.

### The Contribution of Vallabha to Christology

If Sankara's advaitism cannot support incarnation, except by way of offering apologies for it and attenuating it as far as possible, is there any advaita which can be helpful to the Indian Christian in constructing a Christology? I think Vallabha's Suddhādvaita and Aurobindo's ideology can serve that purpose. Suddhādvaita pursues the 'idam' line of thought to incarnation, in which it finds a culmination. Vallabha does not use modern theological language nor does he use the thought-forms which St. Paul and St. John use. But he stands for the primacy of the avatar, the absolute supreme reality of Krishna. He adopts the theological framework of the Bhagavadgita. For him Krishna is the absolute—no absolute behind him, no God, no Brahman apart or beyond him. In this respect he stands at the opposite pole to Sankara: in advaita when God and man unite God alone remains; in Suddhādvaita Krishna alone remains. If Sankara says, 'how can Krishna be an absolute or universal?', Vallabha would retort, 'So much the worse for Brahman as the Absolute'. This note, that in Jesus God has become man and has come into the creative order, sounds true to the Scriptures and the early apostolic testimony. To the apostles Christ and the Holy Spirit were existing realities, and God was in them; there is no going beyond them. The metaphysical was somehow absorbed into the physical.

Sri Aurobindo comes nearest to St. Paul's Second-Adam Christology. Creation gradually draws God into itself; when the Holy Spirit or supra-mental life enters man, he becomes the crown of creation, the Creator fulfilling Himself in creation. God and man become one, the Son of Man. Jesus' description of Himself as Son of Man has yet to receive due attention from Western theology. Indian Christian theology, with the help of Aurobindo and Vallabha, may bring into relief its significance. Dr. Keller's statement that the divine assumption of human nature cannot obtain absolute reality does not ring true to apostolic teaching and conviction. The resurrection and ascension does not prove his point; for if we take them with the undeniable conviction of the second advent of Christ, Christ retaining His body all through, the



reverse seems to be the case : they show the conviction of the absoluteness and ultimacy of the Incarnation.

The Indian inherits the total culture of Hinduism and not a section of it; it lives in him not as a dogma of theology but as an intuition and a vision. The Upanishadic note is more characteristic of the Hindu heritage than the advaitic. Let us interpret Jesus in the light of our inheritance, not of a School ; let us formulate our theology in the light of advaita and our Christology in the light of Vallabha and Aurobindo; why not ?

In the exploratory period the Indian Christian will best serve the cause of theology by portraying Jesus from the standpoint of all the *darśanas*. We will have five or six interpretations. Dr. Karl Keller has given the advaitic portrait ; I have tried, however sketchily, to give the Suddhādvaitic portrait. Let us have all the other pictures ; then we can judge which of them comes nearest to Jesus.

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We have not hesitated to follow the example of scripture in saying to those who hold idol worship as the best way to know God : ‘ You use some *mūrti*, some material form to help to see God. It may be through *mūrtipūjā*, the worship of an earthen image ; or through *śilāpūjā*, the use of a stone image ; or through *panchalōhapūjā*, the folding of the hands to an image of one of the five metals. Yet you have been taught that it is only *manōmayapūjā*, the worship of the mind, of mental images, that can avail to show you the Invisible. You confess that conscience shows the ineffectiveness of idol worship. You worship some of the gods of your fathers in their *śāntamūrti*, their mild form, and also in their *ugramūrti*, their fierce aspect, suggesting both the goodness and the severity of God. Yet you know, and freely admit, that no images, however many, can show God as He is’ . . . . . We can and do say : ‘ The Lord Jesus, Whom we proclaim to you, has proved Himself to us the image, the very *tatvamūrti*, of God.’

W. E. TOMLINSON

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Brahmanical philosophers declare unconditioned Spirit to be being (Sat), thought (Chit) and joy (Anand). We, trained alike by the testimony of our own consciousness and by the teaching of our faith, to believe in the personality of God, and to think of Him as distinct from ourselves, have difficulty in conceiving an impersonal God, and in perceiving the full bearing of the above definition. But let us try to introduce into it the idea of personality and consequent relationships, and chiefly the relationship of the Creator and the creature, imparting what He Himself has ; and we have : the impartor of Being—the Creator ; the impartor of Thought—the Word ; the impartor of Joy—the Comforter. Here, then, we have in the Vedantic Trinity a certain analogy to the Christian Trinity.

J. ROBSON

# Reflections on Indigenization

WILLIAM LASH

*(The writer was Chairman of the Conference on Worship held at Bangalore in March 1955, under the aegis of the East Asian Theological Commission set up by the World Council of Churches.)*

Is indigenization, a term none of us liked, something deliberately to be done? If so, what are the best methods of doing it? On the other hand, is it a process which goes on inevitably whether anybody does anything about it or not? These were the kind of questions which arose at a Conference on the Indigenization of Worship in Bangalore in March 1955. The Conference was held under the auspices of the World Council of Churches, and we had the *Faith and Order* Secretary of the World Council with us. From him we learnt that a Commission on Worship was proposed by the Faith and Order Conference at Edinburgh in 1937, set up in 1939, and produced 'Ways of Worship' in 1950. At Lund this was criticized as being one-sided. In consequence three Commissions were set up for Europe, America and East Asia. Our Conference was to consider one of the five questions set before the East Asia Commission, and such a Conference had already been held in Ceylon early in 1954.

It was as well that we met in such a context. It is only too easy with such a subject to become immersed in a local approach and be blind to the wider aspects, but all East Asia is considering indigenization. Our Christian brethren in Burma agree with us that it is a matter of urgency. Ceylon has anticipated us in tackling the question. The Philippines consider it necessary to tackle it; while Japan has its fears over it, perhaps because of dangers of syncretism. We soon realized also that whether or not the Commissions in Europe and America had the subject on their programme, they would certainly be faced with it, if the Church were a living organism and not a fossil.

## The Theology of Indigenization

This last became apparent when we got down to discussing the theology of the subject. It soon was apparent that indigenization is an inevitable outcome of the Doctrine of the Incarnation. God became Man. He not simply became Man in general, but a man of the times and circumstances of Palestine of a certain century. Wherever the Church goes indigenization is a natural growth of the seed of the Word of God in each cultural soil in which it is planted. It is a process which begins as soon as the planting begins. It may be checked and hindered or deliberately encouraged, but it must go on or else the plant will wither.



Yet it is the same seed which is planted everywhere, universal, catholic. Everywhere what grows from it, however conditioned by local circumstances, must be recognizably the same. In conscious assistance to the process of indigenization it must never be forgotten that there is this irreducible minimum. The process must not be allowed to divide us from our brethren throughout the world, but to provide an enrichment to a common heritage.

The importance of the irreducible minimum came home to us in another way. We realized that the Gospel had been brought to India from countries where the seed had already been subject to an indigenization. It came with the trappings of another culture. This was stressed as being true of the Syrian traditions in Malabar as well as the later arrivals from Western cultures. Some of these trappings had so long been worn that they had acquired a local look and had themselves been indigenized. Others had hampered indigenization, and the process could be as much helped by the deliberate removal of hindrances to a natural growth as a deliberate fostering of such a growth.

We found that another challenge to the Church in this matter arose out of the Doctrine of the Incarnation. Christ is perfect Man as well as fully God. The Church therefore is in ideal the perfect expression of the society of men. In any country Christianity offers the means of the integration of the culture of that country. This challenge is especially formidable in a country such as India with its immense and diverse traditions of culture, not only within the Hindu pattern but beyond it as well.

### Motives of Indigenization

From the experiments of De Nobili onwards there have been deliberate attempts at indigenization for evangelistic purposes, and the question arose whether or not such a purpose was legitimate, or was, as it were, an aberration, not belonging to the main historic process of the growth of the natural life of the Church in a new environment. Historically it would seem that such deliberate attempts with such a motive have not lasted long. On the other hand, a Church which has forgotten its missionary obligation is generally content with a routine of worship inherited from the past, while a Church which is quickened by evangelistic zeal becomes more aware of the culture of neighbours at its doors, and the process of indigenization is raised in response to the needs of those brought up in such a culture.

A factor which enters into the awakening of the Christian to his place in his country is the rising up of strong national feeling, such as has been experienced in India for several decades. Fellow citizens are quick to point out elements of foreignness, and the Christian Indian himself, and foreigners who sympathize with Indian national aspirations, are encouraged to find means of conforming Christian culture in the country to the rest of the surrounding culture. With this motive consciously active, or the deeper motive of a wish to see the incarnational principle carried into effect, or as a simple response to a personally felt call, individuals in the last few decades have attempted to live as fully as possible in the cultural tradition of the part of India best known to them, both for the purpose of rooting Christian tradition in that local tradition, and of making the Christian way of life more accessible to other Indians, by adopting at least externals which they can readily appreciate.

# Experiments in Indigenization

## *The Christian Ashram Movement*

As a part of this trend the modern Christian *ashram* movement had its beginnings thirty to forty years ago. With it came conscious attempts at common Christian living in traditional Indian patterns of social life, architecture and forms of worship. We were fortunate in having at the Conference at Bangalore Dr. S. Jesudason, of Tirupattur, to bring before us some of the fruits of such experiment. We also had the Rev. R. C. Das, whose contribution was not confined to the *ashram* aspects of the subject, and must be referred to later. He himself is an example of a deliberate attempt at indigenization which we associate with the *ashram* movement.

Have these individuals and groups played an important and permanent part in the process of indigenization? The answer to this appears to me to be an affirmative one, even if a greater part of their expectations may suffer a disappointment, and their experiments prove to have no more apparent permanence than those of De Nobili and others. They have broken the mould of sterile accepted patterns, and they have shown in many directions what can be done in the way of using modes and forms which belong to the traditions of religious approach in India, but are themselves not necessarily identified with particular doctrines which are alien to Christianity. At the same time some of their experiments have shown the dangers inevitable in adoption of elements which have developed in other religious traditions, and Dr. Jesudason himself sounded a note of warning against any blind acceptance of practices which are imperfectly understood.

## *Poetry*

This whole problem was illustrated by an interesting discussion of the use of the Hindu poetical tradition. In some cases whole stanzas of Hindu poetry had been taken over into Christian worship. In other cases poetry had been taken over from Hindu sources and Christian terms substituted for Hindu. In other cases Christian poets, soaked in the poetical tradition of their country, had used traditional metaphors, and words and phrases, but had given them a new content in a Christian sense and context. The valuable comment was made on the whole matter of what may be called deliberate indigenization that De Nobili had failed in his experiment, because it was a use of 'identification' as a method to attain some other end, while fruitful indigenization must be an identification in spirit with the culture of the country. The Christian poets who spontaneously used the traditional idiom, but creatively gave it a fresh meaning were in the fruitful way of working, whereas the other methods of adoption not only had their dangers and were plagiaristic, but were also sterile. Yet it was claimed by some that a few of the great *bhaktas* have risen above their environment and expressed at times the universal aspirations of the human heart face to face with the divine, and as such these expressions could be used by all men, including Christians.



## *Liturgical Worship*

The greatest concern for care was felt in dealing with liturgical worship. Here were elements that were a common heritage even from scriptural times, and from the centuries of the early Church when in East and West, about the Holy Land of Palestine, the Christians were in cultural communication with each other, and maintained and developed forms with central elements of a constant nature, whatever the less essential accompaniments might be. Fr. K. Philippose very wisely impressed upon us the need for care to keep them; he suggested that the essentials of the liturgy were: Readings from Scripture, Preaching, Spiritual Songs, Prayers and Sacramental Acts. There was a general consensus of opinion that not only the historicity and uniqueness of the Gospel should be maintained, but the historic continuity of the Church and its universal nature. Mr. M. M. Thomas thus reminded us of ecumenical responsibilities.

At the same time it must be understood that indigenization can actually assist ecumenical understanding. Some of the divisions in the Church have arisen over misunderstandings of forms and customs, which in their traditional context still arouse prejudiced emotion, though the ancient causes of it have no longer the same validity. In a new context, provided by a desire for indigenization, a fresh approach can be made in which these prejudices lose their force. The liturgical experiments of the Church of South India give illustration of this phenomenon. The process is further assisted by the revival of interest in liturgy in many branches of Christendom, which are allowed to work together to a common end in a new context.

Mr. Savarimuthu raised the question as to where we should look in deliberate indigenization of forms of worship. Should it be to ancient Hindu tradition? Should it be to mediaeval? Should it be to Muslim? Should it be to what is current in modern India? We were faced with the danger of the academic, and of creating forms which could be technically correct and yet as much out of touch with modern Christian and non-Christian life in India of today as forms inherited from foreign lands. We were interested to hear from Mr. Macphail, a member of the Liturgical Committee of the Church of South India, that no ideas of deliberate indigenization had been in the minds of members of the committee in preparing forms for the Church. What had been very vividly in mind were the actual congregations in village and town who would use the forms, and the necessity of forms expressing their aspirations and devotion.

This certainly pointed us back to the conception of indigenization as a process that inevitably happens, wherever the Church of Christ comes into visible being, on the principle of the incarnation. Liturgies must spring out of the experience of worshippers, and cannot be written in ivory towers. That does not mean that men with exceptional gifts cannot make decisive contributions. It does mean that such contributions must be made in the context of the actual worshipping life of the Church. A poet and musician, as Archdeacon Mara showed us, who actually writes and composes in one of the traditions of India, may find that, when it comes to music which accompanies liturgy, the tradition must be modified to accord with the congregational character of Christian worship which has no precise counterpart in the Hindu customs.

When we come right down to preparing liturgical forms, or modifying those already in use, recent experience, both in the Church of South India and the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, goes to show that in the great central and sacramental acts of the Church, however much all parts of the Church may be laid under contribution for enrichment, nothing much peculiarly Indian can be done in the way of modification, because of their universal character. The indigenous element appears in the accessories, and these accessories have been there for generations, and are no modern invention of those who now think in terms of indigenization.

### Indigenization in the Villages

The very conditions of life in villages have made such indigenization inevitable. There has been no money for elaborate buildings for worship in Western or *consciously* Indian style. The prayer houses must be just local village style. There has been no money for elaborate Church furnishings. There has been simply the floor to sit on, and the village musical instruments to accompany the only kind of songs which they can accompany, and these have not seldom been themselves composed by the village poets, or poets whose childhood was steeped in the village life. Village customs accompanying such social occasions as weddings or thanksgivings for firstfruits or harvests, and personal occasions have been so strong that they have persisted among village Christians, unless they are clearly incompatible with Christian faith and life, and it has not been easy to resist them even if they are. The villagers have long been doing what townsfolk talk about. In his richly suggestive introductory lecture the Rev. R. C. Das gave us many examples of how Indian traditions of worship could be used by Christians, and I wondered how many of them would not already be found among our village Christians, as spontaneous expressions of their devotion.

Of course local conditions affect such generalizations. In some places conversion has been followed by a considerable dislocation of village life, and even removal to Christian colonies surrounding Mission Houses. In others village life has gone on, especially where whole groups have come into the Church, though even there the former place in the village social order has sometimes been lost by the converts and led to a lesser dislocation. In some it has been possible to bring over into the Church a social structure almost intact.

I think, for instance, of an *adivasi* region where the Church has developed in some degree of isolation from other Christian groups, and where the missionaries have been specially alive to local conditions, so that in photographs of forty and fifty years ago you cannot tell which is the missionary as he is attired and looks just like the rest of the company photographed. The spiritual songs sung in the churches, including translations of Scriptural and other Church canticles, have all been composed and written by local *adivasi* poets, and the accompaniments are the local village instruments. The life of the Church is ordered by a series of *panchayats* which lead up to a *Moti Panchayat* which governs the affairs of the whole region, including social customs as well as those more strictly ecclesiastical, though fully aware that the social life is part of the spiritual life. The chairman of the *Moti Panchayat* is himself an



*adivasi* of the region, and the whole is integrated, as a whole, into the larger life of the Church of the Diocese. Local conditions and the sympathetic care of those who brought the Gospel to the people there has made possible the Christianization of a culture with a minimum of alien elements in it.

## Indigenization and the Universal Church

Indigenization affects the whole of the Christian's way of life. It can be seen perhaps most clearly in such special examples as I have mentioned, but it is a matter of the Christian way of life being in harmony with the general cultural trends of the life of the commonality of citizens of this country. Into this have come already trends from the West which are likely to continue. However much national self-consciousness tempts to the underlining of certain national characteristics, India becomes more and more a part of a world civilization, and economic, and even social, influences from elsewhere play their part. Such a process of cross-fertilization of cultures can be for enrichment of all. The East is influencing the West as well as the West the East. These influences from without are most apparent in towns, especially the few great cosmopolitan towns, but slowly, and not so very slowly, they pass on to the countryside.

As a world-wide community, as a community which has existed immemorably in East and West the Church has here a special part to play, firstly, in realizing its own world-wide character, as it is in such organs as the World Council of Churches, and secondly, in fostering the very best elements in cross-fertilization which is bringing nearer the day of mutual understanding between peoples of diverse cultures, and helping them to find themselves as one community of men, created by one God.

Worship should be the focus of the whole process. In worship man should express his deepest instincts and his profoundest attitudes, not only in his relations with God, but in his relations with his fellowmen. The common man, if he exists, may not be articulate in these matters, but when he finds himself caught up into worship which truly articulates them for him, he has a rich satisfaction of a kind he cannot otherwise have. Already in many parts of the Christian community in India these have been finding expression spontaneously. One of the first tasks in following up the Conference at Bangalore will be to attempt to gather up some of these expressions so that all parts may be stimulated by them. It is in the natural process of things, and part of that supremely natural, as well as supernatural, event, the Incarnation of God in our Lord Jesus Christ, that the supernatural shall become increasingly at home in every natural environment. Another of the tasks in following up the Conference will be to assist the awareness of the process of indigenization, and so to hasten it.

At the Conference at Bangalore a Continuation Committee was set up to continue the work. Of this Principal J. Russell Chandran is the Secretary. It will be as representative as a committee small enough to be effective can be of the Churches of India. It is to be hoped that the Churches will so co-operate with this committee that it can become a useful organ for all Churches in developing forms of worship in line with the conscious process of indigenization, and draw them together in a common task, which will further the cause of union at one of its deepest and most intimate levels.

# Book Reviews

## ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA

*Śaiva Siddhānta* : by Dr. V. Paranjoti. Luzac & Co., Ltd., London, 1954. 10s. 6d. Rs.5. Sole Agents in India:—The Christian Literature Society, Post Box 501, Madras 3.

Dr. Paranjoti has done a great service to the religious world by her able and scholarly presentation of Śaiva Siddhānta, which claims to be the 'accomplished end', 'the final word' or 'end of ends' of Indian philosophy. This system remained practically unnoticed by Indian and Western scholars, primarily because the 'textbooks' are in Tamil, a Dravidian language of South India, which had not attracted the due notice of Sanskrit scholars either in India or outside. Apart from the fact that the Dravidian languages are generally more difficult for a foreigner to master than the Aryan tongues, Sanskrit has generally remained the language of theology in India. Even the great South Indian theologians like Sankara and Rāmānuja used Sanskrit as their medium in preference to their own native tongue. It was not till the advent of European scholars like Bishop Caldwell and Dr. U. G. Pope that the treasures of Tamil literature were made available to Western scholars. This good work has been ably furthered by Dr. Paranjoti's book on Śaiva Siddhānta.

This system is presented concisely in the twelve Sūtras of *Śiva Jñānabodha*—a work consisting of 40 lines of Tamil poetry (by Meykaṇṭa Deva), and as Dr. J. H. Piet says, it is 'one of the most closely reasoned philosophies found anywhere in the world'. The first six Sūtras deal with the proofs for the existence of Pati (Lord), Pāśa (bond), and Paśu (individual soul). The last six Sūtras enunciate the method and benefits of Realization of Śiva. It is essentially a theology of salvation.

Śaiva Siddhānta accepts three *Pramāṇas*—*pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāna* (inference) and *śabda* (scriptures, Vedas generally and Śaivāgamas particularly). Of these, the supreme place is given to the scriptures, as Śiva Himself is their author. The proof for the existence of God is based on these primarily. The attack on this position by the Sautrāntika school does not seem to be quite baseless, since the Siddhāntin appears to argue in a circle. He appeals to the scriptures to prove the existence of God, while the authority of the scriptures is based on the fact that God Himself is the author!

But according to the Siddhāntin, the scriptures should not be taken on blind faith and so he starts to give arguments for the existence of God. He states that the different entities of he, she and it, which are diverse and finite, are subject to the three processes of creation, preservation and destruction. So the whole world is also subject to the same processes. A pot implies a potter. Likewise, the world is a created product. As Dr. Paranjoti points out, the fallacy of taking for granted



that what is true of a part, is also true of the whole is apparent. But what Dr. Paranjoti does not clearly bring out in her discussion is that this argument suffers from the same defects as the classical cosmological argument of the West.

The scriptures are also the prime authority for positing three eternal substances—God, Soul and Matter. The question why there are three eternal substances and not one (Advaita) or two (Sāṅkhya) is not answered logically by the Siddhāntin. Sāṅkhya philosophy accepts the same three *pramāṇas* as Śaiva Siddhānta but comes to a totally different conclusion, which is atheistic and dualistic, partly because the Śaivāgamas do not bind him.

So also no logical reason is given by the Siddhāntin as to why Śiva should be the Supreme Lord and not Viṣṇu. The further question, how the souls are tainted by the *Malas* even before they are embodied, remains unanswered by the Siddhāntin, except by an appeal to the same scriptures. But if the major premises based on the three *pramāṇas* are accepted, then the rest follows in a chain of closely reasoned arguments. That is why the system gets into difficulties when confronted by others which do not acknowledge the same *pramāṇas*. These are some of the inherent weaknesses of the system and perhaps need clearer elucidation by Dr. Paranjoti.

The fact remains that all theology is an interpretation of human experience. To those who had the experience this system tries to give a rational explanation for their basic experience. As such, Śaiva Siddhānta is a system of philosophy which calls for one's close study. Further, it has many points of vital interest to a Christian, e.g. the doctrine of the love of God, its strong theistic emphasis, the idea of sin, doctrine of grace, etc.

The first three chapters of Dr. Paranjoti's book (The Cultural Background of Śaiva Siddhānta, Origin and Date of Śaivism and Śaiva Siddhānta Literature) are the result of careful study, research and sifting of facts by the author. The second edition of the book has been carefully revised in the light of subsequent research on the subject. It has a useful appendix. The monistic norm by which the system was evaluated in the first edition is now abandoned, which seems to be an improvement in the right direction, even if it is lamented by students of the Advaita school.

The author admits having not given more space to the logical aspect of Śaiva Siddhānta and its epistemology, since 'there are valuable books on these subjects'. This is true, but we hope that in the next edition this defect will be remedied.

There is no doubt that Dr. Paranjoti has done an excellent piece of pioneering work. The present edition is a definite improvement on the first one. It is readable and neatly got up. The references are carefully given. Dr. Paranjoti deserves our gratitude and congratulation on her lucid, scholarly and highly commendable exposition of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta.

Serampore

A. E. D. FREDERICK

## CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

*The Development of Christian Worship*: by Dom Benedict Steuart, Longmans. 30s. (Available from Orient Longmans, Ltd., Calcutta.)

This book, written in lucid style, is the most important work on the history of the liturgy since the publication of Dom Gregory Dix's monumental work 'The Shape of the Liturgy'. In his discussion the author gives a summary of the opinions of several modern scholars in the field of liturgical studies. Special attention, however, is paid to the views of Dom Gregory Dix whom the writer quotes on numerous occasions with warm approval. Notice is also taken of the writings of Dr. Srawley and Dr. Dugmore. One would have expected to find at least passing reference to the views expressed in the recent conferences of Maria Laach, Lugano and Louvain on the study of the liturgy.

The plan of the book is set out in the introductory chapter wherein Dom Steuart explains the meaning of the two chief acts of the virtue of religion: Sacrifice and Prayer. The major portion of the book is devoted to the consideration of the sacrificial worship of the Church, i.e., the Holy Eucharist. In the section on Prayer the author describes the origin and growth of the public prayer of the Church, i.e., the Divine Office. There is a very useful chapter on the evolution of the Liturgical year. The appendices deal with diverse subjects of Roman Catholic interest.

This is primarily a Roman Catholic book whose main preoccupation is with the Roman mass and its development. In tracing the history of the Eucharistic worship the author covers the familiar ground with rather a cursory treatment of the Eastern Liturgies. The treatment of the problems of the Roman Canon is objective, though the discussion of the place of the Epiclesis in the Canon is as usual inconclusive. But the author summarizes the opinions of a recent Benedictine scholar Dom Gassner who admits the presence originally of an Epiclesis in the Roman Canon, for consecration, and places it after the narrative of the Institution. What then is the author's verdict on the Canon of the mass? It is given on p. 184: 'As Dix says . . . the history of the Roman Canon does not seem very difficult to make out in its main outlines, once we discard the theories about "dislocation and diptychs" and the "primitive Roman epiclesis".'

This is a valuable book for the student of liturgical studies, but its usefulness is severely limited by its excessively high cost.

Calcutta

E. SAMBAYYA

## CHURCH AND SACRAMENT

*Corpus Christi: Essays on the Church and the Eucharist*: by Dr. E. L. Mascall. Longmans. 15s.

This collection of essays is 'dominated by one over-arching conception, the conception of the Church as a reality of the sacramental order, the Mystical Body of Christ, preserved and nourished by the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood.'

Dr. Mascall re-examines and re-states this conception in the light of modern trends in theological and liturgical scholarship. He believes (with



the report 'Catholicity') that Christendom is now in a better position than ever before to recover something of that wholeness of outlook which, however imperfectly, characterized primitive Christianity. And if we are to make this attempt we must be more ready than we have commonly been to call in question the attitudes and formulations that have become habitual among both Catholics and Protestants as a result of the disputes of the sixteenth century.

The great tragedy of the Reformation lay in the fact that, while the great majority of the Reformers were desperately anxious to return, for both their ecclesiastical order and their liturgical forms, to the practices of primitive Christianity, neither they nor anyone else at the time had any adequate knowledge of what primitive Christianity was. A good many features were rejected as mediaeval accretions which were in fact primitive, and a good many features were retained as primitive which were in fact merely mediaeval. Further, there were a number of highly questionable assumptions which had become so deeply engrained in the minds of mediaeval Christians that they never rose to the level of consciousness at all and in consequence became the implicit premises of the arguments of Catholics and Protestants alike. When, in addition to this, religious persecutions and wars had hardened prejudices into inhibitions, the climate was ideal for that condition of deadlock and mutual incomprehension which has continued in the West down to our own time. Perhaps the most hopeful feature of the theological situation today is the appearance in more than one quarter of a readiness to get behind the sixteenth-century alignments and confrontations, to unearth and examine our unconscious mediaeval inheritance, in the determination to escape from the stuffy and thundery atmosphere of post-Reformation theology into a fresher and serener clime.

Dr. Mascall believes that the Anglican Church is peculiarly fitted to perform this task of theological psychotherapy, for it is fettered neither by the late-mediaeval theological rigidity of the Council of Trent nor by the personal domination of the tremendous figures of the Continental reformers. Appealing as it does to Scripture and the Fathers, it is peculiarly fitted to grasp the opportunities of a situation in which the most vigorous movements in theology are in the realms of Biblical exegesis and patristic study. Free, as the dogmatic Protestant is not, to see the Bible steadily and to see it whole, and free, as the modern Roman Catholic is not, to see the Fathers as they are and not as recast in the mould of the Council of Trent, the Anglican theologian today is uniquely favoured for the task of recovering the lost unity of an integrally Catholic theology. It is this conviction that has inspired the writing of the essays which are collected in this book.

The first two chapters present an exposition of the nature of the Church and its unity, and of the relation between the Church and the Sacraments in general. The central chapters consist of a theological discussion of the development of the Eucharistic canon and of the nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice and the Eucharistic presence. This section contains a thorough and discerning appraisal of the teaching of De la Taille, Vonier and Masure. The concluding chapters deal with the Eucharistic theology of St. Thomas Aquinas and Bishop Charles Gore, and with certain modern developments in Eucharistic practice.

These studies, which are all penetrating and original, convey to the reader a clear understanding of the broad sweep of liturgical develop-

ment through the centuries, and they further enhance Dr. Mascall's reputation as a writer with exceptional qualities of insight and scholarship.

Calcutta

L. L. LANCASTER

## THE BOOK OF AMOS

*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Amos* : by R. S. Cripps. Second Edition. S.P.C.K. London and Post Box 1585, Delhi 6. 25s.

The recent appearance of a second edition of Cripps's Commentary on Amos is a reminder of the vast amount of research that has been done in the field of Old Testament studies during the quarter of a century that has gone by since the first edition was issued. This detailed and learned commentary first appeared in 1929, and has for some time been out of print. Gratitude is due to the S.P.C.K. for once again making it possible to obtain what must certainly be the fullest commentary on Amos in the English language published during this century, and it is a matter for regret that the author died just before the publication of this revised edition of the work by which his name will be remembered.

In these days, when commentaries are so expensive, Rs.17 or so is not an excessive price to pay for a book which runs to over 400 pages. The cost would no doubt be much greater if the process of revision had been more complete, but the second edition consists of a reproduction by a photographic process of the whole of the first edition, together with a 'Preface to the Second Edition', consisting of 24 pages of new material, bringing the book up to date. The author was severely limited by accepting such a method, since there was no opportunity to alter the text so that it would conform with the conclusions reached in the new preface. Included in the new material is a useful list of commentaries on Amos published since the first edition, and in the footnotes to the preface many other recent books are mentioned which have a bearing on the interpretation of the book. Apart from a few verbal alterations to the chronological table on p. 110, the reviewer has not been able to discover any changes in the text of the original commentary.

The subjects treated in the new Preface are *Archaeology and the Book of Amos* ; *The Date of the Prophesying of Amos* ; *Literary Problems* ; *Sacrifices and the Sacrificial Cult in the Prophets with Special Reference to Amos* ; *Translation : Hebrew Poetry* ; and *Exegesis and Application*. As might be expected in view of recent trends in Old Testament studies, it is the section entitled *Literary Problems* which provides most of the new material. A brief sketch of the views of the Scandinavian scholars is given, so far as they affect the study of the prophetic books, and the author indicates that his sympathies lay with the traditional view regarding the transmission of the prophets' messages, rather than with that of the Scandinavians. In the next section, Cripps sets out his reasons for adhering to his former view that the prophets were not against sacrifice as such, but only against its abuse. He goes too far, however, in asserting (p. xxxii) that 'But for [Amos v : 25] perhaps the idea would never have arisen that Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah were radically opposed to sacrifice.' Other



verses in the same chapter, as well as in chapter iv are just as outspoken, quite apart from statements by the other prophets.

It is unfortunate that the fifth section of the Preface: *Translation: Hebrew Poetry*, should have been set out in such a way as to obscure the few modifications which are made to the conclusions reached in the commentary itself. If the four sections discussed (i: 9, 10; ii: 13; iii: 12; vi: 10) had each been given a fresh paragraph, they could be more clearly seen and more easily found. Users of the commentary would do well to make marginal cross-references from the original commentary to the new material in the Preface, for which no index is provided; (the original index remains unchanged).

Despite the unavoidable drawbacks in the form of the book, its value, which was already great, has been enhanced by this new production. This is a book which all theological schools and colleges in India should have in their libraries, particularly if they have not yet obtained the first edition.

Serampore

B. F. PRICE

A.D. 2453

*From a Christian Ghetto*: by Geddes MacGregor. Longmans. 8s. 6d.

The year is A. D. 2453. The Christian Church, suppressed and persecuted by the World State, has been driven underground, where it still maintains a rich spiritual life. Here we have the letters of Paul, a tutor in the University of the Christian Underworld, to his pupil Timothy. Timothy is specializing in Church History, with special reference to the twentieth century. The letters offer a running commentary on the ecclesiastical life of our own day.

The letters make good reading, and are most refreshing, but are not for those who believe that any discussion of the Church must be shrouded in solemnity, nor for those who are afraid to laugh at themselves. Paul writes with engaging candour, and there is not much that escapes his eye. The piquancy of his comments may even offend some. 'Go to Anglican sources', he tells Timothy, 'where you will sometimes find the Church of England depicted as having been always stoutly protestant before the Reformation and devoutly Catholic ever afterwards.' In fashionable Presbyterian churches 'it was considered a mark of great homiletic genius and skill to be able to smuggle even the smallest pinch of religion into the inexpert weekly report on current affairs technically called the sermon.'

The writing is brilliant, but the book must not be dismissed as merely a clever satire. It has reality and depth, and for all its lightness and wit has a serious object. The Church that we know today is not the Church as it ought to be, or as God wills it to be. If this book helps to stimulate fresh thought about the Church and its task, it will have served a very salutary purpose.

Calcutta

H. J. TAYLOR



*Esther, Song of Songs, Lamentations* : by G. A. F. Knight : S.C.M. Press.  
Available at Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 5 Russell St., Calcutta 16.  
Price Rs.6-1-6.

This recent volume on three of the lesser-known books of the Old Testament is a welcome addition to the expanding series of 'Torch Commentaries'. As the bibliography at the beginning of each section indicates, there is a scarcity of recent commentaries in English on these books, most of the better-known ones being upwards of 40 years old. It is perhaps an unfortunate necessity that the author has to use as the basis for his commentary the Authorized or King James Version of the Bible, that being the translation which the ordinary reader will possess, since it means that much of the commentary, particularly on the Song of Songs, consists merely of an improved translation.

This series of commentaries is a product of the growing tendency to read the Old Testament in the light of the New, and to stress the unity of the purpose of God which runs through both Testaments. Professor Knight is evidently at home in the realm of Biblical theology, but this commentary shows how its expression can sometimes be carried to extremes. We find a tendency to read into some passages things which were not in the mind of the writer, nor even warranted by the whole Biblical background or the New Testament interpretation of the passages in question.

Professor Knight has a difficult defence to make when he pleads for the validity of the inclusion of Esther in the Christian Canon. Once he has conceded, as he inevitably must, that the book is a work of fiction, he has undermined much of what he says in the section headed 'A Christian Book'. 'God's mighty acts', to which he refers there, are events *in history*, however much interpretation may be involved in the record we have about them. To apply the same language to what is palpably fictitious is to devalue the term when it is used with reference to the Exodus from Egypt and other events in history.

The author has undertaken a difficult task in writing a modern theological commentary on these books. He may have read too much into the Bible here and there, but the commentary on the text is on the whole admirably illuminating, though often too short to be satisfying.

Serampore

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According to the central, and on the whole, consistent, development of the Christian understanding of the relationship between revelation and reason, reason becomes fruitful and capable of reaching a relatively reliable view of the universe and the purpose of man's existence in it, when it is governed by the insights of the Christian faith. This does not mean that faith supplies the data of empirical knowledge; the search for and examination of the empirical data of knowledge remains the function of the empirical sciences, including theology. It means rather that faith supplies the 'clues' or categories of interpretation by which the empirical data of science and religion can be rightly understood.

A. RICHARDSON



## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

The Rt. Rev. Lesslie Newbigin, Bishop of the Diocese of Madurai and Ramnad in the Church of South India.

Mr. P. Chenchiah, M.L., Advocate.

The Rt. Rev. William Lash, Bishop of the Diocese of Bombay in the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon.

## Books Received

S.C.M. Press :

F. GOGARTNER: *Demythologizing and History.*

The Christian Students' Library :

W. SCOPES: *The Parables of Jesus.*

M. WARD: *Outlines of Christian Theology*, Vols. I and II.

Macmillan :

J. JEREMIAS: *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus.*

V. TAYLOR: *The Ministry of Jesus.*

Longmans :

F. POEHMAN: *How to Read the Bible.*

ANCILLA: *The Following Feet.*

S.P.C.K. :

BARTSCH: *Kerygma and Myth.*

WOODHOUSE: *Doctrine of the Church in Anglican Theology.*

ROUSE AND NEILL: *History of the Ecumenical Movement.*

# BOOKS ON THEOLOGY

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